IMPRINTS
The Newsletter of Literacy BC

Setting an Agenda for Tomorrow...

Welcome to our Conference and Celebration

Over 130 participants from around the province are gathering November 30 - December 2 for Literacy BC's 10th Anniversary Celebration and Conference at the Empire Landmark Hotel in Vancouver.

The conference will give us an opportunity to review our accomplishments over the last decade, celebrate our commitments and build agreements on the future direction for literacy in B.C.

Senator Joyce Fairbairn, Special Advisor for Literacy to the Minister of Human Resources Canada, will speak at the Celebration and Reception on November 30. Senator Fairbairn is a longtime literacy champion and advocate.

Awarding-winning journalist Peter Calamai will give the keynote address - "The Next Big Challenge - Bringing New Energy and Focus to Literacy" on Dec. 1. Calamai directed the first Canadian literacy survey, "Broken Words" in 1987, which prompted federal government action on literacy issues.

Senator Joyce Fairbairn

The keynote speaker for the conference dinner is Lesra Martin. Instrumental in the release of Rubin 'Hurricane' Carter from prison, Mr. Martin's inspiring presentation demonstrates that the power to make a difference exists in each of us.

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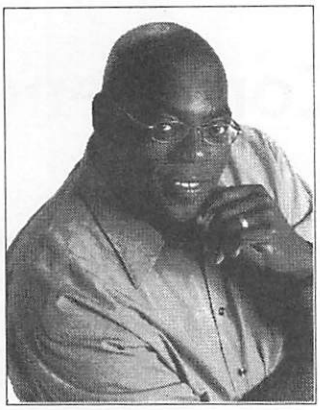

Lesra Martin

Peter Calamai

The Literacy BC Board for 2000-01

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Literacy BC Annual General Meeting

Literacy BC held its annual general meeting in Vancouver on Friday October 13. Our guests were past and present members, practitioners from the literacy/ABE field, donors, contributors and other friends. The keynote speaker was Paul Gallagher, outgoing President of Literacy BC, who provided a presentation on "The Politics of Literacy."

Creating a Provincial Literacy Plan for the Next Decade

A message from Linda Mitchell, Executive Director, Literacy BC

In October, 1999, the Board of Literacy BC began a strategic planning process, focused primarily on Literacy BC as a provincial organization.

What has become clear is that the strategic planning process, as originally designed, needed to be broadened, to encompass the whole literacy field in BC, including the challenges

News from Literacy BC...cont'd

faced by learners, families, workforces, practitioners, local community organizations, public educational institutions and government decision makers.

A major focus for our work this year will be on the province-wide Consultation on Literacy, shaping specific recommendations for future literacy strategies in BC, which will move literacy concerns and actions much further and deeper across the whole province, and the conference, **Setting an Agenda for Tomorrow.**

In addition to these major activities, we will continue with the following:

√ increasing public awareness and support for literacy

√ supporting adult learners

√ providing the1-800 helpline

√ building and supporting literacy research capacity and activities in BC

√ developing and supporting family literacy development in B.C.

√ providing leadership and support to the BC electronic conferencing and communications system and to the interprovincial electronic conferencing system

√ supporting and coordinating the regional literacy networks

√ providing professional development training

√ developing and supporting workforce literacy initiatives in BC

√ management of the *Literacy Materials Bulletin* and the provincial Literacy Resource Centre

For more detailed information, visit our website at: www.nald.ca/lbc.htm

2000 Canada Post Literacy Award Winners
I to r: Connie De Melo; Sally Gellard, Educator Award; Joan Jarman and Dave Sherwood, Prince George Public Library, Community Leadership Award, Karen Taylor, Educator award.

Double Award Winner... Connie DeMelo

After 10 years, Connie De Melo is still excited about learning. The 69 year old Castlegar grandmother and Selkirk College ABE student was honored this fall as B.C. winner of **The Cooperators Learner Achievement Award** and the **Canada Post Individual Literacy Achievement Award.**

Connie received both awards at the Canada Post ceremony in Nanaimo on September 13. (see photo).

Connie, born in Portugal, moved to Canada with her husband 37 years ago. She raised a son, now 40, and a daughter, now 35, and has two grandchildren.

One of three brothers and four sisters, Connie says, "I was sick as a small child and never went to school. I learned how to be a dressmaker and a tailor in Portugal, and made my own patterns, though I could not read," she says. "I learned how to sign my name when I came to Canada."

Ten years ago, Connie's husband became blind as a result of brain surgery. At that point, unable to pay bills, do banking or shop by

Continued on page 4...

Double Award Winner...Connie DeMelo (cont'd)

herself and unable to rely on her husband's help, she faced learning how to read and write. "I couldn't do anything,"says Connie, "I felt like I was blind. I felt like a prisoner in my own house." A tutor from Project Literacy West Kootenay (PLWK) Castlegar worked with her at home for two years -- teaching her the alphabet and how to count -- before she was ready for ABE. Connie explains that she still has "difficulty learning" and "gets stuck on big words."

Connie attends Fundamental level English and uses the computer lab at the college two mornings a week and also attends a weekly evening PLWK group at the library. She uses the home computer awarded by Canada Post to work on her writing skills.

Selkirk College ABE instructor Ron Stinson says, "We are very impressed with Connie's perseverance and desire to continue learning. She never gives up -- she just keeps going. I think the computer has motivated her." He adds, "Connie has been a wonderful ambassador for us -- she has recruited many ESL learners in the community to come to our program."

"I am really pleased -- I can see changes in myself," says Connie, "I always used to stumble and now I read more easily....I can go back now and read what I couldn't read before."

Asked what she still wants to achieve, Connie is clear. "I want to write a letter with no mistakes in it. I want to be able to send letters to my family and friends."

LiteracyBC

Donor Appreciation

To those who have contributed $100 or more:

Georgina Brunette • Jennifer Cliff-Marks • John Grieve • Reg Labonte
Dave Nickel • Audrey Thomas

To those who have contributed up to $100:

Shauna Butterwick • Dr.and Mrs. George Ditchburn
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Special appreciation to 7-Eleven Canada for donations collected from the coin boxes in selected 7-11 stores

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- Supporting Learners
- Providing Consultation, Referral, and Resources
- Raising Public Awareness
- Coordinating Regional Literacy Networks
- Providing Training and Professional Development
- Influencing Public Policy
- Building Partnerships

LiteracyBC
601-510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver BC V6B 1L8
Telephone: (604) 684-0624
Toll free in BC: 1-800-663-1293
Facsimile: (604) 684-8520
e-mail: literacy_bc@douglas.bc.ca
Internet: www.nald.ca/lbc.htm